



For Dolly Yellowbird, Steve Gavin and for over 700 people over the past four years, selling **Our Voice** magazine has been their best shot at earning at least part of their living. They are proud to be working. It's their job and it depends on their customers, the people who generously buy and read

Our Voice. There are thousands of people in our communities who survive on nearly no money, disability pensions, or some government support. For most of them there is no job out there. The flexibility of selling **Our Voice**, being their own bosses and setting their own hours, is what works.

Our Voice
the spare change magazine



For more information about **Our Voice** call (1-888) 428-4001. In Calgary call 508-9051. **Our Voice** is a project of Bissell Centre and Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation.

APRIL 1998 Vol. 5 No. 4
SOLD BY DONATION
Please buy only from badged vendors.
Your vendor pays 60¢ per copy.

Our Voice

the spare change magazine

4 YEARS

SELLING ON THE STREET

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the spare change magazine

4 YEARS

SELLING ON THE STREET



Our Voice

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Edmonton City Centre Church
Corporation, Edmonton
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OUR VOICE is published to
provide an income opportunity
for economically marginalized
people in our society while
communicating about their issues
to the public.

ADVERTISING

For advertising rates and informa-
tion, please contact **OUR VOICE**
at 421-7966.

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OUR VOICE welcomes your contribu-
tion. Letters sent to the editor are
assumed to be for publication, unless
otherwise indicated. **OUR VOICE** wel-
comes written submissions, particularly
those on IBM or Mac compatible com-
puter disk, cartoons, photographs or
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Opinions expressed in this newspaper
are not necessarily those of **OUR VOICE**, the editors or publishers.

OUR VOICE is a member of the
North American Street
Newspaper Association NASNA



Hundreds of people have
been out on street
corners selling this
publication since it
began four years ago. As we
celebrate our fourth anniversary,
it's important to focus on these
people, the ones the publication is
published for. Most of those
hundreds of vendors have gone on
to other things, but many have
made it a regular part of their life,
their job.

In Edmonton, there have been
over 700 vendors. There have been
hundreds more in Calgary,
Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg.
Now the publication is only in
Alberta, as the interest in
Saskatchewan and Manitoba
faded.

Selling a magazine can be a
tough job. Vendors say many peo-
ple object to their presence, some
are even abusive. They also say
many more people are kind and
supportive. Any vendor who sells
in a steady location reports they
soon have regular customers who
buy each copy from them. The
vendors who keep at it say they
like meeting the public, and the
feeling of working in a public loca-
tion.

And they all are grateful to their
fellow citizens who recognize that
as a vendor they are contributing,
doing something for themselves.

It's a job that depends on good

will from neighbours, and
also on an interesting, attractive
publication that people will con-
tinue to want to purchase.

Running a street vendor publi-
cation is also a tough job. Sales go
up and down with the weather.
Vendors come and go depending
on their needs. **Our Voice** has had
to be subsidized in every year of
publication. The publication has
tried different formats, magazine,
tabloid, and even went to twice a
month for most of 1996. Even
with the support of the communi-
ty-minded businesses and organi-
zations that buy advertising, the
bills are never all paid. Bissell
Centre and Edmonton City Centre
Church Corporation have contin-
ued to underwrite the project in
Edmonton, and up until last year
Calgary Urban Project Society
(CUPS) did in Calgary. Last July
CUPS struck out on its own with
Street Talk, its own publication in
Calgary.

In Vancouver, *Spare Change*, the
street publication out of which
Our Voice grew, stopped publish-
ing last year, leaving a big gap for
the vendors there. In Alberta **Our
Voice** continues to help vendors
who need the work and striving to
connect communities.

Thank you for your support.

Keith Wiley
Managing editor

New office, new edition in Calgary

Thanks to the Calgary Native
Friendship Centre, **Our Voice** has
again a distribution office in
Calgary. With a donated comput-
er and fax machine, vendors now
have a place to visit and pick up
their magazines in Calgary.

With this issue we are also
now inaugurating a separate
Calgary edition of the publication.
We will have more Calgary stories
and news from the street in
Calgary. We are always open for
suggestions, call the Calgary office
at 508-9051 or call Toll Free to the



editors' office at 1-888-428-4001.

In return for use of the office
space **Our Voice** is also now pub-
lishing a Calgary Native
Friendship Centre page in our
Calgary edition.

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Congratulations Our Voice on your 4th Anniversary

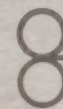
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"We celebrate the 4th Anniversary of Our Voice"

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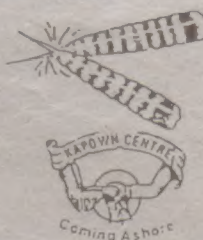
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Our Voice gives me a sense of being productive, and I believe will help me pay my computer course and internship. It will get me back to a good paying job. Thanks for all your support. Your investment in me will help my future plans.
Vendor #441 1998

"It's been a very positive part of my life, it helps me keep my head above water."
Dennis 1998

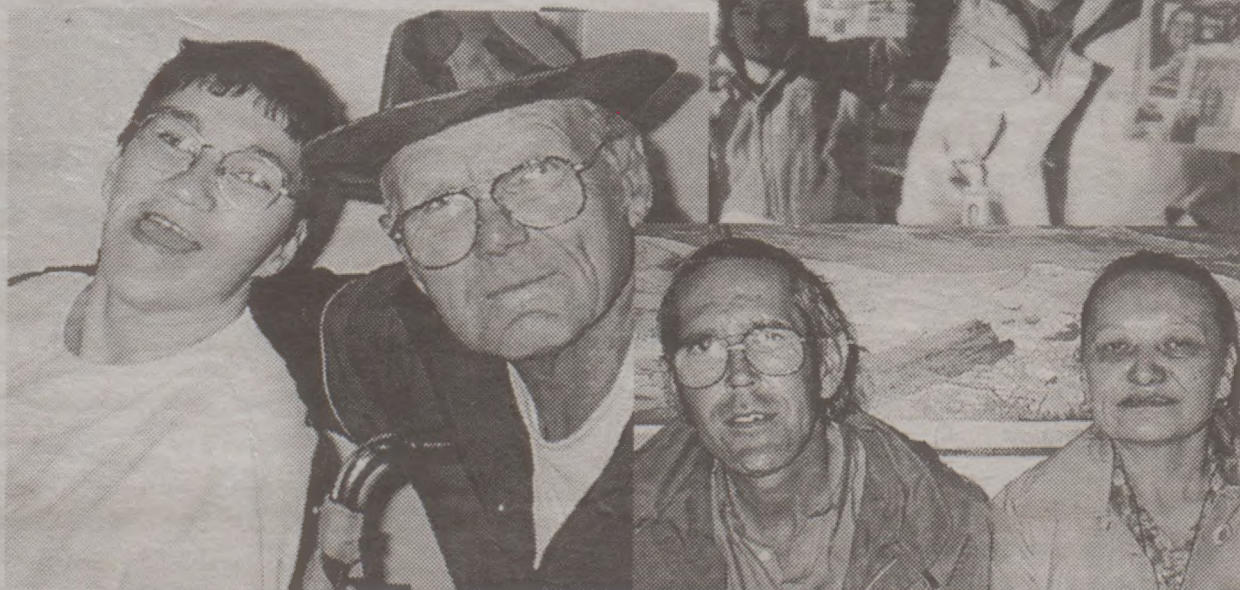
"I've enjoyed selling the magazine. It's allowed me to become more comfortable when I deal with people. It helps me take care of my family and myself."
Dolly 1998

Our Voice is a job. I can think of a million other ways to make money but they all lead downhill for me. This is a good route.
Milan 1994

But you know what's really good about vending, buyers are very supportive with their comments like: keep up the good work, keep a positive mind frame. And that's a real help to me. It makes it easier to react to the ignorant comments that I get.
John 1997

Our Voice has given me the opportunity to turn my life around in a positive way. Working with **Our Voice** is enabling me to help others less fortunate than myself.
Chris 1994

The money I've earned sell **Our Voice** has helped me get off the street. I have my own place now, and I'm slowly furnishing it. I've made a lot of friends among the vendors too, we're really looking out for each other and it's created a real feeling of family.
Wayne 1994



SONGS OF 'THE STREET

3rd Annual Poetry Night

Songs of the Street continues to harvest the soul of the inner city.

The scene at Operation Friendship, a centre for inner city seniors, was warm, intimate and often overwhelming. Almost two hundred people crowded in to hear the poetry, many were forced to stand and listen from the back of the room. The readers often left the crowd gasping as their verse revealed the tragedies and quaking emotions of their lives.

Twelve Edmonton businesses and agencies sponsored the night. They chose the poetry categories for the inner city poetry competition, and they judged the work and awarded the prizes to the winning poets.

When sponsors judge the poems, it allows people who aren't familiar with the inner city, and with poverty, to read first hand the words of those who struggle with those realities.

There were more than two hundred poems from more than one hundred poets submitted to this year's contest.

"It's really a matter of expression for many of these poets. Often people struggling with poverty and alienation feel pent up. We've seen the relief in the eyes of the poets once they're given the venue for communication. It's their time to break through stereotypes and judgements and tell people what their lives are really like and how they feel about it," says Michael Walters who organized this third annual Songs of the Streets competition.

The night was hosted by A-channel's Janis Mackey who introduced the sponsors and the ten winning poets. Some were winners at the previous two poetry nights, including Tom Hind, Linda Dumont and Heather Slade. Three music performances provided a break from the strong messages of the poems. Musicians Brent Oliver and Gavin Dunn of the Maybellines, sang some tunes as did singer-songwriter, Jen Kratz and busking performer Ernie Gambler, whose own poetry of the streets danced through his guitar.

Watch for Songs of the Street Volume Three, an anthology of inner city poetry to be out in the summer.

Winners and Sponsors

CATEGORY	SPONSOR	WINNING POET
Music of the streets	Pam Barrett MLA	James Iwasuk
It's a bad part of town	Inner City Pastoral Ministry	Tom Hind
Hommage to Women	The Citadel Theatre	Carrie Schiffler
Fairy Tales	The Scroll of Poets Society	Linda Dumont
My Body	Boyle McCauley Health Centre	Linda Dumont
The most beautiful person I've ever known	Our Voice Magazine	Heather Slade
Queer notions	Orlando Books	Heather Slade
Political Poetry	Raj Pannu, MLA	Lynn-Marie Prety
You learn something new everyday	The Edmonton Journal	Jolene MacLuskey
Tales from the street	Boyle McCauley News	Trena McLean
Relationships	Bissell Centre T.E. Bissell Thrift Shoppe	Cheryl Kaisawatidum
A dream come true	Greenwoods Book Shoppe	Michael Antoinette

Thanks also to PATRONS: Chivers, Greckol & Kaneo, Patti Hartnagel, and the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation



WINNING POET HEATHER SLADE



EMCEE A CHANNEL'S JANIS MACKEY



WINNING POET JOLENE MACLUSKEY



WINNING POET JAMES IWASUK

To All But God

by Heather Slade

When you see me
you see only
a fat Indian
an ugly woman
a too young mother
a shabby dresser
When you hear me
you hear only
a toothy lisp
a faltering memory
a too talkative loner
a frustrated yell
If you delve a little deeper
you'll find

poor health-a drain to health care
two kids-a drain to welfare
mental illness-a drain the sane
You'll never know the beautiful child
who loved to dress up as a princess
or the dynamic grad speaker
who had the crowd on it's feet
or the vibrant bride full of hope
for a lifelong partner in love
to you I remain
pitiful, worthless, unlovable
—to all but God
You think I don't see your arrogant sneer
don't hear you hostile snicker
as I lug groceries and kids
and my own swollen body
on buses, through malls

across busy streets
I keep my eyes down
but my head up
I turn stone deaf
to the jagged slurs
I choke back a tear
and keep my mouth shut
now my pain becomes vis-
ceral
it cannot be hidden
so I can dance like St. Vitas
and draw more stares still
I'm reminded of how I must seem
how pathetic, how odd
I can't prove my beauty
—to any but God.

Heather Slade's poem was the winner of the Our Voice category, The most beautiful person I've known.